

The Hon. Paul Edbrooke MP
Minister for Men and Boys

Men and Boys

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

2026-27 Victorian State Budget

22 MAY 2026

Men and Boys portfolio – the first of its kind in Australia

- Our **dedicated focus on men and boys** will create new opportunities and build on existing investment to help them reach their full potential – including:
 - supporting strong mental health and wellbeing
 - engaging and succeeding at school, and through clear pathways for training and employment
 - building connections and positive participation in local communities.
- Boys' and men's lives are shaped by what happens at school, work and in their communities – we will support them by taking a **partnership approach with communities and across portfolios**.
- This work will **complement action on gender equality** and women's safety, with significant achievements and further work underway across those portfolios.

Why this matters – outcomes for men and boys

Supporting mental health and wellbeing

- **72%** of deaths by suicide in Victoria were male in 2025
- **42%** of men age 16-85 years have experienced a mental illness
- **63%** of men and boys in Australia don't reach out for support when they need it
- Men are **twice as likely** as women to die from overdose
- Almost **3 in 4 alcohol induced deaths** in 2023 were men
- More than **4 in 5 gambling related suicides** are men.

Succeeding at school and through clear pathways for training and employment

- **Boys perform well in numeracy**, with opportunities to strengthen literacy NAPLAN outcomes
- **87%** of the construction workforce are men but trade apprenticeship completion rates are not keeping pace with workforce demand.

Building connections and positive participation in local communities

- **18%** of men between 16 and 85 years experienced social isolation in 2024.

Investing in practical opportunities

Supporting mental health and wellbeing

- **\$46.8 million** to make sure everyone can afford and access mental health care
- **\$104 million** on initiatives to reduce alcohol and drug harm

Succeeding at school and through clear pathways for training and employment

- **\$10 million** to continue a Literacy and Numeracy Early Intervention program for primary school children
- **\$459 million** to help Victorians train for in-demand skills
- **\$137 million** for vocational learning and skills

Building connections and positive participation in local communities

- **\$35.9 million** to continue critical participation initiatives and invest in community sports infrastructure

Hearing from men and boys on what matters most to them

- Building a strong focus on men and boys starts with listening to the people and communities who know these experiences best
 - We will be travelling the state **meeting with men and boys** to hear firsthand about the opportunities, pressures and experiences shaping their lives.
 - We will engage community members on **what is already working** in their communities – in their schools, workplaces and community organisations – and **where more work needs to be done**.
 - We will be working across portfolios to make sure the **significant investment in the 2026-27 Budget, and existing investment, is connected and delivering outcomes** for men and boys.